Interview with William E. Hutchinson

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WILLIAM E. HUTCHINSON

Interviewed by: Jack O'Brien

Initial interview date: August 10, 1989

Q: This is part 1 of an interview with William E. Hutchinson, an old friend and colleague. My name is Jack O'Brien. The date is August 10, 1989.

Hutch, would you begin by telling us how you got into the business?

The Lengthy Route Into USIA

HUTCHINSON: Well, I got in by accident, as has happened in most of my career. I had been working as a newspaperman in Honolulu from 1937 until well into the war, and was among other things a foreign correspondent—a war correspondent for the Overseas News Agency. I also worked occasionally for United Press.

1944: Recruited to Work in OSS in SE Asia

Then in 1944 the Office of Strategic Services—the OSS—decided it wanted me as an "expert on Japanese affairs." So, after a certain amount of training, I was shipped off to Admiral Mountbatten's headquarters in Southeast Asia. I spent the rest of the war in Calcutta.

I was primarily concerned there with support of underground activities in the occupied Japanese territories in Southeast Asia, especially Burma, Thailand, and Indochina. I also necessarily became familiar with a good deal of what was going on in the Japanese military and civil structure.

1945: War's End, Made Chief Editor of General MacArthur's Monthly Reports to American People

At the end of the war I came back to Honolulu briefly, but was almost immediately recruited by General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo. There I became chief editor of the monthly reports that General MacArthur made to the American people and the world about his stewardship of the occupation of Japan and Korea and the Ryukyu Islands.

Q: That was a civil activity?

HUTCHINSON: That was a civil activity. We recorded the civil side of the Occupation. I had a crew of about a hundred people—statisticians, historians, analysts, draftsmen, all sorts of people. We put together comprehensive monthly reports on civil aspects of the occupation—political and governmental affairs, the trial of war criminals and purge of many people implicated in wartime policies; economic activities, the reform of Japanese education, and so on.

Later on, the emphasis shifted to historical studies of the Occupation. We put together a series of 50-odd monographs on all sorts of political, social, and economic aspects of the Occupation. Some of these individual monographs were pretty hefty, running several hundred pages apiece. They generally covered the prewar history of the topic, leading up to the situation faced at the outset of the Occupation, and then the actions taken by the Occupation authorities and the Japanese to solve these problems.

This project lasted till the end of the Occupation. At the end of the Occupation, therefore, I found myself really quite familiar with a vast array of information upon Japan and I had been in Japan more than six years.

1951—Winding Down of Occupation: Asked to Produce National Intelligence Survey on Japan

As the Occupation wound down, I was asked by a joint delegation from the State Department, War Department and CIA to take a small group of my people and put together a draft national intelligence survey of Japan.

Q: This would have been what year?

HUTCHINSON: This was in 1951. So we produced more or less a rewrite, a shortened rewrite, of the work that we had done as historians and reporters over the past half dozen years.

I also helped in the allocation and disposition of the libraries and other information assets of the Occupation. These papers were distributed among the State Department, War Department, CIA and the American Embassy.

1952: Recruited to Join IIA, Immediate Predecessor Agency of USIA as Publications Officer, USIS/Tokyo

About the time this was being completed—and my team and I had offices in the American Embassy while doing this job—about the time this was being completed Charlie Arnot, an old friend whom I had known during the war and before in the United Press news agency —.

Q: That's A-r-n-o-t?

HUTCHINSON: A-r-n-o-t. Charlie was at that time the assistant director of the press and publications service of USIA (Actually, the immediate predecessor agency of USIA, then known as IIA.) and he had come to Tokyo to look over the newly established USIS office. Anyway, when he wandered through the embassy he was surprised to find me there. He came up to me and he said, “What are you doing here?” I told him. He said, “Why aren't you working for USIS?” I said, “Well, nobody has invited me.” He said, “I'll see to that.” So he went and talked to Sax Bradford who was the PAO and to Olcott Deming, who was the Deputy PAO of USIS Tokyo and in due course I was brought into USIS Tokyo. [Interruption]

My first experience with USIS was getting evicted from the splendid house I had enjoyed during the Occupation. I had had quite high rank in the Occupation as a civilian, and housing to match. The moment that I joined USIS I lost all that, and had to go out on the Japanese economy and find a house of my own. It was quite a comedown, but we recovered all right.

In due course I was appointed to a fairly lowly position in the information side of USIS as publications officer. There was not much of a script written for what a publications officer should do, although everybody knew you had to have one, and so I improvised a good many things. I was blessed by absolutely first-rate local employees in my section who provided invaluable assistance in getting to know people in the publishing field and helping me to work on them.

Some of the things I did, such as providing subsidies for anticommunist books and other publications, were not exactly within the USIS mandate and might have been judged improper by standards adopted later, but they were thought useful and effective at the time.

Meanwhile, in this job I met a great many Japanese editors of newspapers and magazines, especially the intellectual magazines, of which Japan had then as it does now

a great number of all descriptions, from far right to quite far left. And I was in a somewhat peculiar position because I was now, oh, fourth or fifth ranking officer compared with being perhaps the number one or two level in rank around the Embassy previously.

In any case, we were fortunate in having an ambassador at that time, Robert Murphy, who was undoubtedly a great man. He took an interest in what I was doing, invited me to one of his staff meetings to explain my activities, and thus brought my work and the capabilities of my office to the attention of other people in the Embassy. We got a lot of useful propaganda published in the Japanese press, especially in the magazines, which was my specialty. We also sponsored a number of original books by Japanese writers as well as American books in translation. The book operation developed into a separate branch of my operation in Tokyo.

And so things went along for about a year and a half. There was one editor in particular with whom I became friendly who had a magazine that was slightly left- wing to my way of thinking in those times, but not very far left wing. I can't for the life of me remember what the name of the magazine was now. It wasn't quite at the top of the list like “Chuo Koron” or “Sekai,” but it was about third or fourth in line among the leading intellectual magazines.

Q: Spell those.

HUTCHINSON: Chuo Koron is C-h-u-o K-o-r-o-n, roughly translated means public opinion, more or less. Sekai, 'the World,' S-e-k-a-i.

But it was an important magazine. And this editor, whose name was Hara, H-a-r-a, and his given name was Katsu, K-a-t-s-u, became very friendly although a little standoffish. Mr. Hara spoke a certain amount of English and we got along pretty well. I think it's important to realize that by this time I had been in Japan something like seven years. I knew the ropes. I also knew a great deal of the background and the underlying causes of many of the surface phenomena that we saw in those days.

In any case, I began to notice that no Saturday would pass without Mr. Hara stopping by my house without invitation, without prior notice. He would come in and he would smoke my cigarettes and he would drink my beer and he would talk and talk and talk. It always lasted an hour and a half to two hours and it happened every Saturday without fail.

Q: Talking about what?

HUTCHINSON: All sorts of things. Current policy, current politics, current events. There was no limit to the range of his questions. It was perfectly apparent, however, because he didn't really smoke much and he didn't really drink much, that he was not there to smoke my cigarettes or drink American beer. He had some other business in the back of his mind. But I was long enough in Japan to know how to play along with this, so I told the political section of the Embassy what was going on. And they encouraged me to keep up these contacts and report back if anything interesting happened.

These meetings went on for about a year and a half. And then at length one day Mr. Hara said to me, “Mr. Hutchinson, I have a friend, he's in politics—well, he's not exactly in politics but he's an important figure in the background of politics. I'd like you to meet him.” I said, “I'd like very much to meet him, Mr. Hara.”

of course I notified the political section right away, and so in the course of another week or so he brought along and introduced Mr. Kishi, Mr. Nobusuke Kishi. And that name is, the given name is N-o-b-u-s-u-k-e. The last name is K-i-s-h-i.

Q: This would have been what year?

HUTCHINSON: That would have been '53 I should think, 1953. What month it was I don't know. But Mr. Kishi I knew by reputation to have been implicated but not convicted of war crimes. He had been a member of the Manchukuo administration, a fairly important

member of the Manchukuo administration, and he had been held at Sugamo prison for some time.

Q: That's S-u-g-a-m-o?

HUTCHINSON: Yes. He was imprisoned for some time but he was never indicted. Eventually he was released and not purged from politics like so many of the pre-war Japanese politicians. We set up another meeting and to this meeting I invited some people from the political section.

Q: And when you first met Kishi, did he consider it just purely social or did he say that he had something in mind.

HUTCHINSON: Oh, it was just social. But he had some political ideas and obviously he wanted to talk politics. And I took the opportunity to say I'd like to invite some of my friends from the political section.

Now you must understand that in those days anybody in Kishi's position would have been watched like a hawk by the Japanese police. And anybody in the position of the American Ambassador or the Counselor for Political Affairs or Economic Counselor, anybody at the upper levels of the Embassy would have been watched, too. But I provided neutral ground where people like this could meet without being watched.

At that time I had never had any contact with the then Ambassador, John M. Allison. However, I found out many years later that Allison knew all about all this, had been properly informed, and gave his blessing to the whole venture.

But anyhow, we had this meeting and to it I invited a number of people from the political section. I don't remember them all for certain, but certainly one of them was Sam Berger, later on Ambassador, now deceased. Berger was then Political Counselor for the Embassy. Also there was Bill Leonhart, also a retired Ambassador now. Dick Lamb, who

was a Chinese and Japanese language expert, he's been dead for many years. I believe Dick Finn—a classmate of yours and mine, Jack, at the War College in 1959—was one of those there, I'm pretty sure. There may have been others, I don't remember, but those four I'm pretty sure of.

And we had a number of meetings in my house in Meguro where we provided the food and drink and I sat and listened while the dealing was done by the plenipotentiaries, Kishi and the people from the political section.

The parts that I do remember were extremely interesting. This can all be checked up on if the historical section of State will provide us with a look at some of the messages of those days. But in any case, as I remember it, Kishi outlined his foreign policy, and he outlined his major political game plan, which was as follows: He was going to upset the then ruling Liberal Party of Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru. Want that spelled? Y-o-s-h-i-d-a S-h-i-g-e-r-u. And he was then going to wreck the party and rebuild it in a slightly different form. And he outlined the number of senior statesmen—about five of them as I remember—who would have to become prime minister for reasons of precedence before he himself could become prime minister.

He also outlined his foreign policy. Fifteen points, as I recall it, something like Wilson's 15 points, and we went down through a checklist where he showed which points corresponded to U.S. policy and which points conflicted with U.S. policy and he explained why he had chosen the policies that he had.

And all this, reporting all this was of course not my responsibility but the responsibility of the political section, which obviously did its job.

Q: Was it clear, Hutch, that he was presenting these views in order to seek the approval or comment of the Americans?

HUTCHINSON: I think it was clear that he wanted at least the tacit backing of the United States government. He didn't want objection from the U.S. government and he wanted the U.S. government to understand where he stood because he intended, fully intended for these things to happen.

Q: Did any of our people comment as he presented his plans?

HUTCHINSON: Oh, yes. Yes. But I don't think anybody challenged them particularly. I don't remember anybody challenging them, disputing the basis of his judgment of particular policy points.

In any case, in the fullness of time it all happened exactly as he had laid it out except I think one of the would-be prime ministers died before he could be appointed. But Kishi came in as prime minister and head of the new Liberal Democratic Party, and so these talks really laid the ground work for the past 35 years of Japanese-American relations.

Q: And it all had its origins in the Hutchinson house.

HUTCHINSON: In our living room, exactly. One curious thing that I have never quite understood is that shortly before I left Japan in May of 1954 Mr. Kishi invited Kimiyo and me—.

Q: Camille? Let's identify.

HUTCHINSON: My wife and me to dinner and an evening at the Kabuki Theater.

Q: This was when he was prime minister?

HUTCHINSON: No, he had not yet become prime minister. But he invited us to this extraordinary dinner and theater party. Mrs. Kishi told me on that occasion, it was the first time in 20 years he had invited her along on one of his evening parties.

(Portion of transcript not recorded) ...Of thanking me for my services, yes. But what made it extraordinary in my view was that I was still an obscure officer in the Embassy. I was not somebody, a prize to be paraded. And yet, during the intermission, he did indeed parade Kimiyo and me around through the foyers of the Kabuki-za and obviously was showing us off to his political friends. For reasons that I have never yet figured out.

I said earlier that I found out later that Ambassador Allison knew all about this deal. That's because when I was in Hong Kong many years later, in 1971 or '72, there was a PAO conference in Honolulu and one of the events at the conference was a big garden party. Ambassador Allison was there. And so I went up to this little old man standing leaning on his cane and I said, “Mr. Ambassador, you won't remember me but—.” He said, “Yes, I remember you, you're Bill Hutchinson, I remember you very well.”

Q: Well, Hutch, before we go on to your next assignment, do you have any final observations on your experiences in Japan?

Explanation of Why Hutchinson Believes He WasChosen as Conduit to American Embassy for Kishi's Plans

HUTCHINSON: Yes, I have two or three things to say. First of all, I think it's true and I think it's of lasting importance that I probably would not have been chosen to be this intermediary between Kishi and the U.S. government if I had not already been in Japan about 7 or 8 years and thus quite attuned to Japanese ways of doing business. I do not think that anybody fresh off the boat or out of the plane can expect to have the sensitivity to the ways of doing business of another country that you gain through living there for a long time.

Second, I think it's important that I was a fairly obscure figure. If I had been a very prominent figure in the Embassy, I probably could not have filled this role. The moral is

of course that junior officers can do important work if they have the confidence of their bosses.

One must recognize too that Kishi was faced with an imperative that required him to act. It's gratifying that I was the chosen instrument. But if I hadn't been available, I have no doubt he would have found someone else.

Third, I think it's important to say this was not really a one-man show. I left Japan in May 1954, but the contacts between Kishi and the American Embassy through USIS continued and the people who carried on those contacts were first of all Kenneth Bunce.

Q: That's B-u-n-c-e.

HUTCHINSON: And after him Bob—your friend, Bob Beecham, who became quite close to Kishi and indeed served, I understand, as his English teacher for some time. So we had set up something that created a lasting relationship.

Q: You were then transferred back to the States and served in what was then called IPS from 1954 to '59.

HUTCHINSON: That is correct.

Q: You had more than one job during that period. Can you give us a summary of what they were?

HUTCHINSON: Yes. I came back to be chief of the News and Features Branch of the Press Service. And we did exactly what it sounds like, we put out the then-universal wireless file which was somewhat modified in the Latin American and Far East and so on versions, but only by clipping and pasting together what was produced centrally. We produced a lot of central features, columns—Gene Rosenfeld's column, for example, and the stable of columnists that he commanded. We put out features for newspapers and magazines. We put out the magazine Problems of Communism which was run by

Abraham Brumberg. And while I was there the magazine Amerika was started, both its Russian and its Polish editions. And Herb McGushin, who had been head of the Editorial Division of the Press Office—.

Q: That's M-c-G-u-s-h-i-n.

HUTCHINSON: That's right. Herb got so wrapped up in that magazine that he left the job of chief of the Editorial Division to run the magazine Amerika.

Q: I understand at one point you and the Soviet Ambassador to Washington had an exchange of views on these two publications, theirs and ours.

Verbal Exchange with Russian Ambassador “Mike” Menshikov

HUTCHINSON: That came a little later. There was an interregnum for a while and I eventually succeeded McGushin as head of the Editorial Division and then Burnett Anderson went off overseas and I became the deputy director of IPS. And I think it was while I was deputy director of IPS that I had my exchange with the Russian Ambassador, who at that time was called “Smiling Mike” Menshikov, M-e-n-s-h-i-k-o-v. The venue was a meeting of the National Women's Press Club. And both of us exchanged polite insults in the best traditions of the Cold War then raging. And that was one of the two or three highlights of my existence as deputy director of IPS.

Budget Hearing Session Before Senators Lyndon Johnsonand Ellender

The other one, the other one might be amusing. We had to defend our budget in front of the Senate. The Senate Appropriations Committee was then chaired by Lyndon Baines Johnson. The magazine Amerika was costing the American taxpayer that year $2.92 per copy. The head of the agency, USIA, in those years was Ambassador—

Q: George Allen?

HUTCHINSON: George Allen. And George, as was his custom, did a brilliant job of explaining the main features of the budget all through the morning session. And he had finished and it was about time for me to come to bat. When Mr. Chairman Johnson said, “There's been a quorum call and I shall therefore have to leave to go to the Senate. But Senator Ellender will sit in my place as Chairman of the session.”

Q: How do you spell that?

HUTCHINSON: E-l-l-e-n-d-e-r. Allen J. “But before I go,” he continued, “I want you to know, Mr. Ambassador, that we here on the Hill think you are an old pro.” End of comment. Senator Johnson got up and left the room.

That was all the signal that Senator Ellender needed. So I was the next witness up and for an hour and 45 minutes we discussed the value of the Polish zloty and the price of theater tickets in Warsaw. And we never got around to the high cost of producing Amerika.

Q: One footnote on this part of your career I think we want to mention is that the Voice and IPS shared a newsroom for a period.

HUTCHINSON: They did. Barry Zorthian was head of the newsroom on the Voice side while I was head of the newsroom on the Press side.

Q: And then later of course the Voice got its own newsroom.

HUTCHINSON: Yes.

Q: Anything more on this period that you'd like to report?

HUTCHINSON: No, I don't think so.

National War College (1958-59);Pakistan, as Deputy PAO (1959)

Q: What was your next assignment?

HUTCHINSON: Well, I went to the War College in 1959. I'm not sure why, possibly the Agency didn't know what else to do with me, possibly they thought that it would—

Q: That makes two of us.

HUTCHINSON: Possibly they thought that it would reform me and curb my radical ways. Possibly they thought my radical ways would be good for the War College. In any case, I went to the War College, which was a very interesting year. I was there with you, of course, Jack, and Dick Erstein that year. And with such other old colleagues as Dick Finn who had been in the American Embassy in Tokyo and a few others. Bill Magistretti had been in the OSS when I was in the OSS.

Q: That's going to be worth spelling.

HUTCHINSON: M-a-g-i-s-t-r-e-t-t-i.

Q: All right. What was your assignment after the War College?

HUTCHINSON: I went to Pakistan as deputy PAO, deputy country PAO. It was a good assignment but not a brilliant one. I spent four years there.

Q: Who was PAO when you arrived?

HUTCHINSON: Clifford Manshardt, M-a-n-s-h-a-r-d-t. Cliff was an old missionary type from India. He spoke pretty good Hindi and was a great gentleman and a good man. He was not particularly experienced in the information side of things but he had all the background anybody could need on the cultural side of the shop. One of the things that were useful there was my War College background, as a matter of fact, because Pakistan had a military regime. A number of the people in the military regime had attended the Imperial Defense College in London and they were all busy thinking about establishing

their own war college in Pakistan and I had a kind of entree into these upper military circles from General Ayub down through his Cabinet.

Q: Ayub is spelled—?

HUTCHINSON: A-y-u-b. But it was a fairly routine job.

End of Side One

Q: This is part two of an interview with William E. Hutchinson. The date is August 10, 1989. My name is Jack O'Brien. Please continue, Hutch.

HUTCHINSON: My job in Pakistan was pretty routine for the most part. A deputy PAO doesn't have quite the experiences of a country PAO, but there were exceptions. For instance, I was acting PAO for a while when Cliff Manshardt became ill toward the end of my tour there, so I was acting CPAO—I took his place. And then we had some visitors.

We had several interesting visitors. First of all we had President Eisenhower and party. He was no trouble. I worked out a system that was applied to help the visiting press cover him. It worked very well. And after Eisenhower, after the Eisenhower regime, we had the Kennedy regime and in the course of the Kennedy regime we had one visit from Bobby and Ethel Kennedy and a number of hangers-on. They made a Ramadan visit early in the morning; they arrived about 4:00 in the morning. Everybody arrived in Karachi about 4:00 in the morning.

Q: Ramadan might need explanation.

HUTCHINSON: Ramadan is a period of fasting for the Muslim. It runs for a full month and people become very testy and upset and easily irritated after spending a long, hot day with no food or drink. Or cigarettes. Or sex.

Lyndon Johnson's (Then Vice President) Insensitive,Mostly Disastrous, Visit to Pakistan

Then toward the end of the time we had unparalleled extravaganza, a visit of Jackie Kennedy and her sister, Lee Radziwill, and they came to—oh, I left out Vice President Johnson, didn't I? I'd better go back to Vice President Johnson because he had an historic visit to Pakistan. Vice President Johnson was the fellow who when he was in India hollered in the Taj Mahal to see how it echoed. He wounded some susceptibilities there a little. And then he came on to Pakistan. When he came to Pakistan I had gone over to Delhi and picked up Carl Rowan who was then the Director of USIA, and George Reedy, and we came back together. And we were back at Karachi waiting for the Johnson arrival. Johnson arrived and began his long, long ride in his motorcade into town. As we found out later, Johnson, who was due at Government House to shake hands with Ayub at about 1:30 didn't arrive until around 3:30 because he had been out pressing the flesh with camel cart drivers along the way. And Carl and I didn't know what was holding everything up, but we eventually got in and got the word on what had been going on.

That afternoon there was a public meeting close to the Embassy where speeches were made in Urdu, greetings to Johnson and flowery encomia of all kinds. We had pulled off Roy Bisbee who was then our branch PAO in Lahore and who, having been born in India, was perfectly fluent in Urdu. We'd asked Bisbee to act as Johnson's interpreter. Roy had a hard time of it, because at this public meeting the Pak government had been so incensed at Johnson's taking his arrival at Government House so lightly that their flowery encomia were just loaded with barbed references. It all sounded superficially pleasant but really was most unpleasant. And Johnson kept saying to Bisbee, “What's he saying? What's he saying?” And Bisbee had to cope with this.

How it Came About That Camel DriverBashir Ahmed Was Invited to U.S.

Well, I didn't have that problem, fortunately. But my Urdu was not bad, too, and the next morning I was reading the papers. I read the Urdu papers at breakfast at home. Everything was uniformly disastrous from a public relations standpoint, except that there was one column in the newspaper Jang, that's J-a-n-g, means “Combat,” written by a columnist,

a very popular columnist, named Ibrahim Jaliis. Ibrahim I guess I don't have to spell. I-b-r-a-h-i-m. Jaliis, J-a-l-i-i-s. And Jaliis wrote a column that ran like this: “Man and boy,” he says, “I've been in Pakistan now for 17 years and man and boy I've seen these big shots come and go. And they come and they talk to the Emirs and Viziers and the sons of Emirs and Viziers and then they go away. Yesterday things were different. Yesterday Lyndon Johnson came to town. And Lyndon Johnson talked to Bashir Ahmed, Uunt-Gharri-ban (camel cart driver).”

Q: Would you spell that?

HUTCHINSON: All right. Bashir, B-a-s-h-i-r. Ahmed, A-h-m-e-d. And 'Uunt Gharri-ban' would be spelled U-u-n-t G-h-a-r-r-i-b-a-n. “And he said to Bashir Ahmed, you must come on over and visit me. And he's promised Bashir he's going to stay in the Waldorf Astoria, the biggest hotel in the world, and he's going to come and visit Lyndon Johnson in Texas and he's going to do all sorts of things. So yesterday was a great day for the common man in Pakistan.” And so on for a couple of thousand words.

Well, I got to the office and asked Frank Kuest, who was then the press officer, what are the press translations saying? He said, “It's all dismal, they're all opposed to Johnson's visit and saying bad things about it.” I said, “Has anybody translated Jaliis' column?” He said, “No, Jaliis got something to say?” I said, “Yeah, I thought it was pretty good.”

So, meanwhile I had smoothed out my own translation and was passing it around for the amusement of people in the office. After a couple of hours the translators brought forth a laborious translation of Jaliis' column and it wasn't as colorful as mine—it said the same things, but not as colorfully. So we shot my translation off to Washington.

Two weeks later Johnson got up at a People to People meeting and he pulled out of his pocket this translation I had made. He said, “That's what I mean by a People to People sort of program. I want you people to invite Bashir Ahmed to come to the United States.”

And so next day I had to call up Jaliis and my conversation went like this. I said, “Mr. Jaliis.”

“Yes?”

“This is Bill Hutchinson from the American Embassy. I wanted you to know that the column you wrote about Vice President Johnson is in the newspapers this morning in America.”

“Vice President Johnson read my column?”

I said, “Yeah, I translated it for him.”

He said, “You read my column?”

I said, “Yes.” And I explained what had gone on.

So the next day there was another column by Jaliis which recounted this telephone conversation. The upshot was, of course, that I had to go find Bashir Ahmed and talk to him and get him prepared for his visit to the United States, which did come off and was a great success in most respects, although it probably ruined him eventually because he never could learn to drive that car that people gave him, the truck that they gave him.

The Jackie Kennedy-Lee Radziwill Visit

Q: Well, Hutch, before we leave Pakistan let's go back to Jackie and her sister.

HUTCHINSON: Well, Jackie and her sister came to town. Of course one of the things they insisted upon doing was visiting Bashir Ahmed and his camel. And Jackie was really a tremendous problem because she was trailed by a world press of at least a hundred people and they went everywhere. Among these were media stars like Marvin Kalb and Sarah McClendon and Marie Ridder of the Knight Ridder newspapers, and teams of

reporters, producers, and cameramen from all the TV networks. I lost my voice along the way but we managed to get all the things done.

Q: Was she married do Onassis at that time?

HUTCHINSON: No, no. She was still the First Lady. She wanted to meet Bashir Ahmed and he had to go rent a camel for the occasion. He had long since got rid of the original camel. But he came up with this handsome camel with its sides neatly marcelled in striking patterns and so on. And Jackie and her sister climbed up on top of the camel and had a little camel ride. And the photographers went crazy over it. We finally got her out of town.

But those are the highlights of my career in Pakistan I'm afraid. Not very significant, but fun.

1963: PAO Libya in King Idriss' Days

Q: And your next assignment was?

HUTCHINSON: In Libya.

Q: This would have been what year?

HUTCHINSON: This was in 1963 I went to Libya. '59 to '63 in Pakistan; '63 to '66 in Libya. Well, Libya was of course not Qadhafi country in those days; it was run by a saintly old man, King Idriss, who had a modern young wife and a rather corrupt court, although the old man was almost a genuine saint.

Q: I-d-r-i-s, isn't it?

HUTCHINSON: I-d-r-i-s. And that was not an interesting place to be. Physically conditions were fairly tough because we had a capital in Tripoli; we had an old capital in Benghazi and we had another capital in Al Beyda in the eastern hills.

Q: Spell that last one for me?

HUTCHINSON: B-e-y-d-a. And I had a nice little villa on the sea, the Mediterranean. It was an interesting, challenging job. I had to learn Arabic enough to cope with the situation. We were really, we did a good job I think on the cultural side. We had a pretty good cultural program and had very good relations with most of the leading intellectuals of Libya. In the countryside, in the Fezzan, which is 5-600 miles to the south in the desert, one of the three provinces of Libya, our USIS center was so much regarded as their own center by the Libyans, that at the time of Qadhafi's revolution it continued to stay open while everything else was closed up because the Libyans thought it was their center. They didn't recognize it as an American center, it was simply the cultural center in Sebhah.

But in many ways it was one of the most enjoyable posts that I was ever at, partly because the diplomatic colony was very small and very thoroughly integrated. Our friends were Yugoslavs, Burmese, Pakistanis, Italians, everybody but the Russians. Chinese were quite prominent there. And it was a small, cohesive and intimate group. And we had good relations with the Libyans.

Q: Now when the transfer of power took place you were there?

HUTCHINSON: No. I was out of that. The Nigerian war had broken out in 1966 and the Agency sent me there.

1966: PAO in Nigeria

Q: All right. Is it fair to go on to Nigeria?

HUTCHINSON: Sure.

Q: So you were in Nigeria—

HUTCHINSON: I was country PAO in Nigeria from 1966 to 1968.

Q: Was that a direct transfer from Libya.

HUTCHINSON: A direct transfer, yes. That took some getting used to. It was an altogether different cultural scene from anything I had ever experienced. It was very rewarding in many ways—a unique experience. To test me, I think, my quite sophisticated staff, especially the VOA correspondent, had a reception for me at which the piece de resistance was African snails, which are about the size of your thumb and approximately as tender as boiled owl. And they wanted to see how I would react to African food. I guess I passed.

But the war of course had already begun between so-called Biafra, the eastern section of Nigeria, and the western sections of Nigeria. And the Ambassador had the devil's own job of keeping U.S. sentimentality from stampeding us into support for the Biafra breakaway government which pictured itself—erroneously—as being Christian, the upright Christians against the decadent Muslims, and so forth. Which is a piece of propaganda itself. Things are not nearly that simple. But we managed to hold the line and U.S. support for a unified Nigeria persisted.

My first assignment, I was I think one day into, one day on the scene when Lieutenant General, G-o-w-o-n, who was head of the military government of Nigeria, asked me to put on a film show for him and his cabinet at his residence in Ikoyi, in Lagos. So I started at the top with these introductions and continued to get along very well with the military leaders, and the civilian leaders, such as they were. Civilian leaders were largely in eclipse during the time I was there. They were beginning to come back toward the end.

Q: What was the state of the war when you left?

HUTCHINSON: It was still going on when I left, but it seemed pretty clear that the union would win. I was fortunate, I had a very good staff there. The African staff were particularly good. And I had a splendid deputy, he's dead now, but Bev Carter—

Q: Oh, yes.

HUTCHINSON: W. Beverly Carter, Jr., he was my deputy PAO, an excellent fellow. And he succeeded me as country PAO and, I hope partly on my recommendation, was later named Ambassador. Because I certainly had recommended him as a potential Ambassador. He died several years ago in Washington. We worked in somewhat difficult conditions. We managed to make friends with a fairly hostile press.

1968: Back to Washington; An Array of Short TermJobs, Culminating in USIA Assistant Director/Africa

Q: Well, do you want to proceed to the next assignment?

HUTCHINSON: My next assignment, well, I went back to Washington where I went through the hoops and sat in a number of jobs. First of all I was deputy assistant director for administration where I had an undistinguished career, I think. That lasted for a year or so. Then I was named inspector general of USIA and that, too, lasted for about a year. Henry Loomis and I couldn't quite agree on what the functions of an inspector general were. I thought he was primarily an investigator. And I tried to confine myself to that. Henry wanted me to be investigator, prosecutor, judge and executioner. And I told him that was his responsibility, if he wants any executions he's got to do it. He got even by writing a terrible efficiency report on me later on.

Q: Henry was at that time deputy director of the Agency?

1976: PAO in Hong Kong

HUTCHINSON: That's right. After that I was made assistant director of the Agency for Africa. And I sat in that job for a year, year and a half, something like that. By this time it was 1971 and Richard Nixon had designs on China and somebody was needed to go over and cuddle up with the Chinese Communists. So I was sent off to Hong Kong as PAO. A very interesting time. We did get to know—

Q: What year was that?

HUTCHINSON: 1971. We did get to know the Chinese Communists' principal representatives to the outside world pretty well. And generally had a large and active program in Hong Kong.

Q: And that was for how long?

HUTCHINSON: '71 to '73. I retired in '73 from Hong Kong.

Observations

Kudos for our Foreign National Staffers

Q: Looking back over your career, pretty wide differences of experience. Do you find any common denominators of such things as, oh, the obvious things is our reliance on local employees to stay in business.

HUTCHINSON: David Newsom, who was one of my ambassadors in Libya, put it very well the other day in his piece in the Washington Post—

Q: I saw that.

HUTCHINSON: —about the death of Muhammad Salah, who was a friend of mine, too. They're absolutely indispensable. And I think that all the things that David said are entirely true. I would add only that it's also necessary, valuable as these people are, it's also

necessary for the individual officer to learn enough of the local language and embed himself sufficiently in the local scene so that he can operate if necessary without them. That acts as a check on their reliability for one thing.

It's not a question of disloyalty, but it's just a question of perception. Ultimately, the individual USIS officer must assess the problem and decide how to solve it.

Q: Yes. Now in your experience have we treated local employees fairly?

HUTCHINSON: We've treated them well. We've probably done all that present regulations permit.

Tendency to Over Classify Documents

I also think there are grey areas, especially in this business of [documents] classification, and I probably don't understand that properly now because I've been out of it so long. But I think that we always did over classify things. I remember one time in Hong Kong when I made the transparently obvious remark that once relations were established with China and it became necessary for USIS to have a source of good printed material in China, Hong Kong's an obvious place to go. And I was chided for this by the deputy chief of mission for putting then in the clear what was “top secret sensitive information.” I said, “Come off it, that's not top secret and sensitive. Any damn fool can see that you can get better Chinese printing in Hong Kong than anywhere else in the world.” And after a few days he saw it my way.

Views on Making Cultural Activities Separate fromInformation Work

Q: Another basic question. There remain to this day differences of opinion about whether USIA should be responsible for the cultural program. Whether there are some people on the Hill who feel that the information side of the program contaminates the cultural side of the program. And it's been going on ever since I can recall. What are your views on that?

HUTCHINSON: I think it's a misapprehension. I think the cultural program is contaminated, sure. But it's inherently contaminated. That's the business we're in, we're in the business of influencing people. And I don't think it matters a damn whether it's at USIA or in State or in a separate agency. I go back to Japan for an illustration of this. In Japan I made very good contacts most of the time. But there was one particular editor of an intellectual magazine that I could not get to first base with—just a matter of personality. But Dick Finn, in the Political Section, was playing chess with him all the time. So Dick did my work, and I did some of Dick's work. And I think that's as it should be.

Q: We're almost at the end of the line here, but I don't want to cut you short on any part of this. Do you have anything that you think we've overlooked here that you'd like to get on the record?

Should USIA Be Re-integrated in DepState?

HUTCHINSON: No, I think that, I think you could say it might be better if we were all integrated in the State Department. It's not easy to tell, because there's probably discrimination between cones in the State Department, but there is probably more discrimination against USIS offices in mission assignments than there would be if they were part of the State Department. And that discrimination probably works to our disadvantage—that is, our national disadvantage—in the long run.

Q: It's always a pleasure to talk with an old friend and colleague and classmate. I thank you very much.

HUTCHINSON: Thank you, Jack.

End of interview